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Human Rights Council
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Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 August 2018]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

GE.18-14416(E)
1814416

Please recycle

No repatriation without accountability for crimes against humanity in Myanmar

One year after the mass exodus of 750,000 Rohingya from Myanmar, there is no meaningful perspective for a voluntary repatriation of a huge number of refugees who searched for protection from a military offensive against the civilian population and crimes against humanity. On June 7, 2018, the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the voluntary repatriation of these refugees. Neither the Government of Myanmar nor the UN agencies have involved and consulted the Rohingya community to clarify under what conditions they could imagine to repatriate. The Rohingya have the right to learn the details of the Memorandum of Understanding because they directly are concerned. However, both parties of this agreement convened to maintain secrecy around the deal which caused much confusion, anger and traumatism among the refugees. Details of the program became known, when parts of the deal were leaked to the public. Instead of participation and transparency, the whole process ignored key demands of the refugees and therefore is doomed to failure.

Previous attempts at repatriation of Rohingya refugees in 1978 and 1991/92 have not included any mechanism for accountability and have encouraged the Government and Military of Myanmar to repeat their massive human rights violations. Although the Muslim community has lived in Myanmar for generations, a 1982 citizen law stripped the Rohingya of their citizenship and made most of them stateless. In the following decades the Rohingya were subjected to widespread discrimination, forced labor and an apartheid-style marginalization. In the Buddhist majority country Rohingya Muslims now are identified as migrants from neighboring Bangladesh. Myanmar Government refers to them as Bengali, not Rohingya.

The restoration of the citizenship rights is perceived by most Rohingya as a precondition for repatriation. The refugees are wondering why they should return without any valuable guarantees of the Government of Myanmar and without any credible attempt by the international community to hold those responsible for crimes against humanity or even perhaps genocide. Their houses in Rakhine State deliberately were destroyed, their rights still are ignored in Myanmar and there is no credible sign of political will among the leadership of Myanmar to respect their basic human rights.

The U.N. High Commission for Human Rights has announced in July 2018 that at least 11,432 Rohingya have fled Myanmar in the first seven months of 2018. The refugees and eyewitnesses have been testifying about persisting violence, burning of houses, persecution and killings of Rohingya in Rakhine State in the first seven months of 2018. No rhetoric can whitewash these facts and figures. Rohingya Muslims still are fleeing their home country because of the denial of basic human rights.

Since the military and cooperating vigilantes have started in August 2017 their massive campaign against ARSA, the armed rebel movement, which claims to fight against the persecution of the Rohingya, Myanmar's security forces and their Buddhist nationalist partners committed nine different types of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, persecution, torture, enforced disappearances, burning of villages, deportation and forced starvation. Some human rights organizations are convinced that genocide has been committed. Even the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein has expressed this suspicion. Human rights organizations as Amnesty International or Fortify Rights have named dozens of military and police officers for orchestrating these crimes against humanity. There is an urgent need for accountability for these crimes one year after the mass exodus has started. Without justice and human rights, there will be no sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis, which undermines not only democratization in Myanmar but stability and peace in South Asia.

Society for Threatened Peoples urges the U.N. Human Rights Council to call on the Government of Myanmar:

- to immediately end the persecution of Rohingya people and to provide them basic human rights and citizen rights,
- to ensure that any repatriation attempt will respect the key demands of the refugees and guarantee full transparency and participation of the concerned people,
- to end impunity and to bring those responsible for the crimes against humanity or genocide before court,

Furthermore, the Human Rights Council should urge the international community to strengthen the humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees, especially in Bangladesh and to build up more pressure on the Government of Myanmar to respect basic human rights.

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Universal Periodic Review

Written statement* submitted by the World Evangelical Alliance, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Cuba: UPR Recommendations Failed to Challenge Cuba to Improve Respect for Freedom of Religion or Belief

1. While several civil society reports[1] urged the UPR Working Group to address the situation of religious minorities in Cuba, it was a disappointment that no recommendations challenged Cuba to improve its record in that area, despite the fact that international standards are far from being met. Three recommendations from India (6.176), Mozambique (6.191) and United Arab Emirates (6.207) merely asked to "continue" current policies in relation to freedom of religion

2. In this context, the World Evangelical Alliance would like to reiterate that religious minorities such as the Protestant Evangelical Christians are confronted to severe restrictions. New instances of harassment took place since the UPR. Cuba's attitude of mistrust and control towards the Evangelical Churches is all the more regrettable as these communities are respectful of the rule of law and of the authorities and they put themselves at the service of the common good and society. The World Evangelical Alliance would like to ask the members of the Human Rights Council to keep the religious freedom situation on its radar and to ask Cuba to take measures to meet its obligations.

The situation of Protestant Evangelical communities

3. Evangelical Protestants have an increasing share of the population, estimated at more than 10%. It is estimated that there are more than 1,200,000 Evangelical Protestants in Cuba, while some estimate that it could reach 1,800,000, if non-formally affiliated Evangelical Christians are included. In fact, many of them are not active members of a church to avoid exposing themselves, which explains these variations in the estimates. Cuba has a population of about 11,500,000, which means that at least 10% of the Cuban population are Evangelical believers.

4. Three types of situations for Evangelical Churches in Cuba can be distinguished according to their level of relationship with the government, respectively, their level of persecution.

Protected churches

5. Since 1959, Cuba has tried to secure the support of established churches, sometimes by force. Churches accepting the liberation theology are close to the State and have favorable conditions. They represent 8% of evangelical protestants in Cuba.

Repressed churches

6. Denominations present in Cuba before 1959 but unwilling to affiliate with the Cuban Church Council have suffered severe persecution in the past century (confiscation of seminary, prison sentences for pastors, etc.) They represent 80% of Evangelicals in Cuba. They do not have the same favors as the protected churches. The government has refused to allow for the creation of the "Cuban Evangelical Alliance". Being tolerate but not recognized, many communities meet illegally in house churches, because they do not receive construction permits or authorization to gather in larger places. They face confiscation, demolition and their leaders can be arrested.

7. In January 2015, the Cuban government announced Decree Law 322, which amends the General Housing Law, which is supposed to regulate private property laws and zoning, but Cuban authorities have used Decree Law 322 to threaten evangelical communities of expropriation. The Cuban Evangelical League was targeted with the confiscation of hundreds of houses that served as a place of worship and the obligation to pay fines. These houses usually belonged to the leaders of the congregations. In the same way, the Assemblies of God saw 2,000 places of worship declared illegal in 2015, with a demolition order if they did not accept confiscation peacefully. Some of these buildings were destroyed, which led to public protests in front of the offices of the Communist Party of Cuba in several provinces where hundreds of leaders gathered, asserting their right to religious freedom. At present, there are still several congregations that are in danger of being destroyed and confiscated, as is the case with the Church of Columbus in the Matanzas province belonging to the Assemblies of God. Many other denominations are in a similar situation.

[1] See UPR reports from ADF International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Patmos Institute.

8. Several pastors have been arrested and later released, such as Baptist Pastor Lleonar Barroso (arrested on 20 March 2016 and who later fled out of Cuba) or Pastor Leanardo Rodriguez (7 April 2016, released on the following day).

Illegal and persecuted churches

9. Churches established after 1959 in Cuba are considered illegal and face the most severe persecution. They represent 12% of Cuban Evangelicals. Some are in the country since over 30 years but are still unable to register with the ministry of justice. There places of meeting are destroyed, and their leaders arrested. Thus, 4 places of worship of the Apostolic movement were destroyed in 2016, their material confiscated, etc. Those places of worship were built on the private properties of the pastors and had legal construction permits. Dozens of pastors of these churches are regularly harassed and arrested. Some have been sentenced, such as pastor Núñez Velázquez on October 2016 (1-year house arrest).

Recommendations

10. In this context, the World Evangelical Alliance asks that members of the Human Rights Council raise the issue of freedom of religion in their discussions with Cuba. We also ask the Cuban government to implement the following recommendations:

- Fully guarantee freedom of religion or belief to all and combat all forms of discrimination against religious communities;
- Put an end to the arrests of religious leaders and believers, as well as the destruction of places of worship;
- Recognize the Evangelical Alliance of Cuba so that churches not affiliated with the Council of Churches in Cuba can maintain relations with the government as well;
- Regularize the situation of house churches and communities forced to gather clandestinely, and authorize the construction of places of worship;
- Guarantee religious freedom to believers belonging to denominations established in Cuba after 1959.

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Technical assistance and capacity-building

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Violence against the civilian population and aid workers on the rise in Central African Republic

Society for Threatened Peoples is deeply concerned about the rise in violence against civilians and staff of international aid agencies in Central African Republic (CAR). On a worldwide level, some 140 aid workers were killed in the year 2017, a 23 percent rise on 2016. The figures are revealing a worrying increase in attacks on aid agencies. CAR, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria accounted for two thirds of 158 major incidents targeting staff of aid agencies.

Armed violence against humanitarian workers has increased in CAR with 181 cases reported in 2018. This marks a 50 percent increase compared to the 120 incidents recorded during the same period in the year 2017. It means that nearly every day an attack against aid workers is registered. On August 1, 2018, an aid worker was murdered in Alindao in the south-west of the country. Some other five humanitarian workers were killed in the first seven months of the year in CAR. The number of attacks against humanitarian nearly has doubled in the last months.

Armed actors looted at least ten NGO-compounds in Bambari (Ouaka Prefecture) between mid-May and late July 2018 and caused a disruption of humanitarian aid missions. A series of criminal attacks against aid workers in Bria (Haute-Kotto Prefecture) in June and July 2018 have prompted several humanitarian organizations to delay or suspend much needed operations temporarily in the region. On July 5, armed men entered a Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)-base in Bria, stealing medical equipment and causing MSF to disrupt their activities. Furthermore, staff of aid agencies has been threatened and assaulted and cash was stolen. Armed robberies are among the most common incidents, but it is difficult to distinguish criminality from militia violence since bandits sometimes pose as fighters and fighters sometimes act individually as bandits.

CAR has been gripped by militia violence since rebels ousted the former president in 2013, setting off a chain of reprisal attacks. Some 2.5 million people of the overall population of 4.5 million are requiring humanitarian assistance. Some 608,000 people are living as Internal Displaced People (IDP) in CAR, 573,428 people have been searching for protection in neighboring countries.

Our human rights organization is deeply worried about the influx of new weapons, which are fueling armed conflict. Deliveries of weapons from Russian Federation to the official security forces have pushed rebel groups to bolster their own stockpiles of weapons as they consolidate control over large parts of the country. The U.N. Security Council granted Russian Federation an exemption to the arms embargo in December 2017 to allow it to provide light arms to government forces and send military and civilian instructors to train them.

Despite Faustin-Archange Touadera's election as president in 2016 and the deployment of thousands of U.N. peacekeepers, most of the country is beyond control of the government. Unfortunately, the influence of non-state actors is increasing and jeopardizing all attempts to search for a political solution to the conflict. U.N. peacekeepers were unable to provide security especially in rural areas or to protect religious minorities and the civilian population. Thousands of Muslims have been trapped in churches or special protection areas and until today, they are unable to enjoy freedom of movement.

With deep concern we have noticed the killing of three Russian journalists on July 2018. There are indications that Alexander Rastorguev, Orhan Djemal and Kirill Radchenko became not victims of a robbery by bandits – as it has been claimed by CAR authorities – but were murdered by a pre-planned assassination. The journalists were investigating the activities of Russian mercenaries and illegal diamond exports. An independent and transparent investigation is necessary to clarify the background of their killing and to bring those responsible for the murder to justice.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the U.N. Human Rights Council to urge the Government of CAR:

- ensure more protection for aid workers,
- to strengthen access for aid agencies and the protection of the civilian population in rural areas,
- to guarantee the protection of religious minorities,
- to start an independent and transparent investigation in the murder of three Russian journalists.

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Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Attempt to Repeal Article 35A by the Nationalist Government of India Which Is Unconstitutional and Breaches the Spirit of the UN Resolutions on the Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir

Introduction

The Indian administered Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), is yet to see an acceptable and just resolution of the long-standing issue since 1947. The United Nations (UN), through its resolutions, has recognised Kashmiris right to self-determination.

On 13 August 1948, the UN Security Council passed a resolution which, inter alia, states: *"The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of people".*

Regrettably, the people of J&K have been persistently denied this right by the Government of India for the last 70 years. The Indian leadership made unreserved commitments to the Kashmiris on this issue including Mohandas Ghandi and Jawahar Lal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India).

The Government of India has attempted to legitimise its occupation by imposing a series of legislations upon the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Attempt to repeal Article 35A of the Constitution India extending special protection to J&K and its state subjects

ARTICLE 35A of Indian constitution says that no law for J&K, existing or future, shall be void as being violative of the fundamental rights if it touches "permanent residents" or confers on them "special rights" on government jobs, acquisition of immovable property, settlement in the state or rights to scholarship or other forms of government aid.

Historically in 1922, the princely state's council of ministers imposed curbs on employment of outsiders in administration, as well as *"all grants of land for agricultural and house-building purposes and grant of houses and other state property shall be made to state subjects only."* A notification in April 1927 defined them.

The basic principles committee set up by the J&K constituent assembly, presented its report on 3 February 1954 - *"All these fundamental rights should be subject to the overriding condition that: (i) no law of [J&K] relating to [J&K] subjects to be hereafter called 'permanent residents' and regulating their rights and privileges; and (ii) no law hereafter to be made by the [J&K] legislature defining the permanent residents and conferring on them special rights and privileges in relation to acquisition and holding of property in [J&K] or in the matter of employment under [J&K] and imposing restrictions on citizens other than permanent residents for settling within [J&K] should become void on the ground that it is inconsistent with or takes away or abridges any of the rights conferred by Part III of Constitution of India."*

On 11 February 1954, the report of the drafting committee was presented to the constituent assembly, in which an annexure set out the provisions of the Indian constitution, besides Articles 1 and 370, that should apply to J&K. Obviously, this annexure had been settled with the Indian government. Article 35-A was among them. On 15 February 1954, it was moved that a copy of the annexure be sent to the Indian government "for appropriate action". On 17 May, 1954, the president's order under Article 370 followed, inserting, among other provisions, Article 35-A in the constitution.

It is part of a compact between J&K and India, the primary reason being J&K is the UN pending issue. Repeal of Article 35-A — which is constitutionally impossible — will not alter the situation, for the 1927 notification is part of the J&K Constitution.

Article 35A special protection provoked the ire of ultra-right-wing nationalist parties, which seek the unequivocal integration of J&K into the Indian union. The unitary concept of nationalism that such organisations subscribe to challenge the basic principle that the nation was founded on - democracy. In this nationalist project, one of the forms that the nullification of past and present histories take is the subjection of religious minorities to a centralised and authoritarian state. The unequivocal aim of the supporters of the integration of J&K into the Indian union was to expunge its special protection endowed on J&K by India's Constitution primarily recognising the unresolved status of J&K.

Article 35A is not a mere executive order under Article 370 but is itself a constitutional provision, a compact recorded in both constitutions. No court can ignore this.

A writ petition filed in the Supreme Court of India by NGO - *We the Citizens* challenges the validity of Article 35A. This has the backup of the Indian nationalist government. The petition, in the main argues, that Article 35A is against the *"very spirit of oneness of India"* as it creates a *"class within a class of Indian citizens"*.

It is abundantly clear that the nationalist government of India is adamant to repeal Article 35A (including Article 370). The Kashmir issue is linked with it and the Kashmiris individuality existence depends on its survival.
The Supreme Court of India has ad nitted the petition and this is disturbing.

Conclusion

Kashmiris, exercising their human rights, wish to register their dismay and protest against India's nationalist government's misadventure.

IHRAAM calls on the President and members of the UN Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and all other relevant UN mandates to intervene in this unconstitutional act and blatant breach of the spirit of the UN Resolutions on the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

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1814423

Please recycle

Viet Nam: Legislative and Governmental Restrictions on Freedom of Religion or Belief

1. The World Evangelical Alliance would like to draw the Human Rights Council's attention to the current challenges faced by religious minorities in Viet Nam, in particular Christian groups. While recognized and registered religious groups are able to manifest their beliefs with less governmental interference, groups without certificates of registration still suffer severe limitations. In November 2016, the National Assembly passed a new Law on Belief and Religion, which came into effect in January 2018. This law maintains the multi-stage registration process to attain recognition. Religious leaders continue reporting cases of governmental harassment, physical assault, arbitrary arrest and detention, sometimes even torture, strict surveillance, restriction on free navigation, property confiscation or vandalism, and rejection of various forms of permission.

The 2016 Law on Religion and Belief

2. The 2016 Law on Religion and Belief introduces some modest improvements for religious freedom, such as a more simplified procedures for recognized and registered groups to request permissions for religious activities, a new provision allowing individuals in pretrial detention to access religious literature and practice religious beliefs, or new provisions allowing expatriate churches to register their congregations.

3. Also, for the first time, the law mentions the possibility of claiming legal status for recognized religious groups. It also purportedly opens the door for these groups to get involved in educational, health, social protection, charitable, and humanitarian activities in conformity with relevant laws and regulations (Article 55).

4. The pending time for a registered religious group to obtain official recognition has reduced significantly from 23 years to 5 years. It seems however that the 5 years period starts with the entry into force of the new law and is not based on the date of establishment of the community in Viet Nam. Also, it means that a community still has to operate "illegally" for several years before it can claim official recognition, leaving them very vulnerable to government oppression.

5. Other provisions still show a high degree of intrusion of the government in internal affairs of religious organizations. Religious groups must submit to the government an annual list of their religious activities (Article 43). Certain activities need to seek explicit approval from corresponding authorities. For instance, prior to an internal conference, a religious organization must send an application for consideration to relevant authorities, with a detailed description of the purpose of the said conference, number of participants, content, concrete programs, times and venues anticipated, etc. (Article 45) In addition, a religious organization which wishes to modify their charter must also report to and request permission from the government (Article 24).

6. The new law also contains vague provisions, creating broad leeway for substantial restrictions on religious freedom in the interest of national security and public order. Several prohibitions are listed under art. 6 as reasonable rejections of religious practices and activities, including "undermining national defense, national security, national sovereignty, public order, public safety, and the environment," "doing harm to social ethics or others' health, life, dignity, honor, or property," "sowing division among the people," and "abusing belief and religious activities to gain personal benefit." Without further elaboration and precise explanation, these clauses can easily be abused to regulate, limit, restrict or forbid the exercise of freedom of religion and belief.

Compulsory Registration of Religious Communities

7. Although the new law has simplified the process for unrecognized religious groups to obtain certificates of registration, many communities still experience unreasonable burden and non-transparent rejection from the government. Churches also report that they often simply receive no answer to their request to be officially registered. The communities not able or willing to register continue suffering from severe governmental restrictions and intimidation.

8. Congregations affiliated with the registered Evangelical Church of Viet Nam – South who have a relatively small number of congregants were forced by provincial authorities to merge with larger churches in order to receive official status. Lead pastors of these congregations denounced these demands which have no legal

basis. Merging distant churches weakens these communities as the longer distances make it difficult for the members to attend church service.

9. Catholic bishops claim that local governments have applied additional and unnecessary hardship upon parishes in rural regions which applied for recognition. This burdensome enforcement was to discourage them from registering and was inconsistent with the promised national framework. The most problematic areas include the Central Highlands (Provinces of Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Kon Tum, and Lam Dong), the Northwest Highlands, and Hoa Binh Province.

Physical Harassment, Arbitrary Arrests, Detention and Torture

10. Although some Hmong Protestant groups have been granted certificates of registration, they continue to be victims of violence and slander. Hmongs are an indigenous people living in the mountains in the North. Several Hmong Protestants have been extrajudiciarily arrested, interrogated, beaten in police custody, imprisoned and pressured to denounce their faith. In some villages, eviction has been established as a punishment for converts. Possessing Bibles or reciting worship services in their indigenous Hmong language is considered illegal. Even though they represent possibly 400'000 Evangelicals, the government does not accept the publishing of their religious material in Hmong language.

11. Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh who has been ministering ethnic minority communities in the central highlands and is a long time pro-democracy activist, suffered from inhumane treatment while serving his 11-year prison sentence for "impeding national unity." At the An Phuoc prison in Binh Duong province, he was put in solitary confinement and endured torture. Local police in Pleiku, Gia Lai province also frequently threatened, arrested, and detained his wife Tran Thi Hong. Particularly, on March 30 2016, public security officials detained Hong and her son and seized their personal belongings while they were en route to a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom. Pastor Chinh was released and exiled with his wife and 5 children to the US on 28 July 2017.

Right to Property and Land Issues

12. In Viet Nam, all lands are State's possession and no individual or group can claim an ultimate ownership of the land. This fact creates a legal hardship for religious communities, as technically the State can take back land whenever it seems propitious. For the sake of economic development, urbanization and modernization projects, certain religious groups, unregistered and registered alike, have lost or are facing risks of losing large portions of their land and property. In fact, land conflict is one of the major sources of tension between the government and religious communities in Viet Nam.

13. In January 2016, a group of approximately 200 security officials and plainclothes police bursted into the Thien An Catholic Monastery, Thua Thien Hue Province. They intimidated and physically assaulted the residents and cut down trees within the property. The attack was allegedly to threaten and pressure the monastery's leaders to give up their land for a local tourism project.

14. In April 2016, Phu Phong Church in Binh Dinh province, a member of the Evangelical Church of Viet Nam-South, reported provincial officials ordered security forces to confiscate a plot of 1,000 m^2, which originally belonged to the church, for the formation of a public garden. While still under dispute, local authorities mobilized loaders and excavators to forcibly start the construction process.

15. The World Evangelical Alliance would like to ask the members of the Human Rights Council to discuss freedom of religion of belief with Viet Nam in order for the government to make further adjustments in view of bringing its laws and policies in conformity with international human rights standards.

Recommendations to the Government of Viet Nam

16. Review the 2016 Law on Religion and Belief and ensure that the State's legislative framework is consistent with international human rights standards. Precisely, provisions related to freedom of religion or belief must be congruent with article 18 of the ICCPR.

17. Clarify and provide concrete formulations of limitation clauses touching on religious practices and manifestations, remove and replace vague legal definitions, so that these provisions are not used to disregard legitimate manifestations of religious freedom.

18. Remove any administrative challenges to registration process of religious groups under consideration. Develop a uniform and transparent registration procedure. Provide clear and satisfactory reasons for rejection of any applications.

19. Allow all unregistered religious groups to freely exercise their freedom of religion or belief. Take all measures to stop any forms of restrictions and harassment against these communities.

20. Halt State and media propaganda against religious minorities and unrecognized religious groups. Promote a spirit of respect and tolerance in public media and official literature and integrate unbiased information about religions and beliefs as part of school education.

21. Appoint an independent commission to investigate suspected cases of torture, degrading treatments and obscure deaths in police custody and detention.

22. Handle land conflicts with religious groups in a fair and transparent manner. Respect right to property and stop authoritarian seizure of lands under dispute.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Enforced disappearances in Pakistan's Balochistan Province

The decades-old conflict between Baloch nationalists and the Islamabad government went violent when the military assumed power in Pakistan in 1999 under General Parvez Musharraf's command. Baloch nationalists blame the Government of Pakistan and the military for denying the indigenous people of the right to development and their due share in natural resources extracted from Pakistan's Balochistan Province like natural gas, gold etc.

The Pakistan military has adopted a brutal counter-insurgency strategy since 2004 to curb the Baloch insurgency. Thousands of people in Balochistan Province, from various walks of life, have been enforced disappeared. Hundreds of them turned dead with bullet-riddled and tortured bodies.

Society for Threatened Peoples has received details of 543 cases of enforced disappearances from January to July 2018. Most of the reported cases belong to four out of 32 districts of Balochistan. In majority of cases, the victims were picked up by security forces from their homes, in front of their families and villagers. Normally, the security forces come and siege the village for hours, search the houses, take all men along with their valuables, and leave. In some cases, the military has burnt selected houses or the entire village, especially in Awaran district of Balochistan.

Families of disappeared persons:

The case of Safar, forcibly disappeared by the military in 2013, came into light when his wife, Ganjal died on 2 June 2018. Safar, 24, was abducted by security forces from his house in Hub town of district Lasbela on 24 October 2013, in front of the entire family, after six months into their marriage. Miss Ganjal tried to resist the army personnel, but they shove her away with the butt of their gun. The couple were residents of Labaach, Awaran of Balochistan. Their families left the village and shifted to Hub town, as there were continuous military operations in the area.

Miss Ganjal knocked every door to get news of her husband. She gradually became a patient of anxiety and hypertension out of sheer helplessness.

The doctors knew her mental condition but could not find a cure. She suffered from an illness nearly all relatives of enforced disappeared persons suffer. Ganjal had her last anxiety attack on 2 June 2018.

The victims of enforced disappearance include Abdul Hai, the son of Mr. Jumma Khan Kurd. He was whisked away by the security forces from the town of Mach on 21st May. He had been sitting in Koh-Baash restaurant when two Vigo pick-ups with more than 20 army personnel accompanied by personnel of intelligence agencies encircled the restaurant and took away Abdul Hai.

Abdul Hai was blindfolded and handcuffed before being escorted to one of the waiting pick-ups. Aged 35, he was a farmer and was the only supporting member of an extended family devastated by a number of enforced disappearances. His brother Ali Sher Kurd had been abducted by the same forces and was found dead in 2010.

Local Justice System

Miss Zahra Mehrab went to Turbat Police Station to lodge the FIR (First Information Report) against the forcible disappearance of her uncle, Noor Ahmad.

Noor Ahmed was teacher and resident of Phulabad, Tump, district Kech. He was the uncle of Karima Baloch, the chairperson of Baloch Students Organization.

Noor Ahmed was abducted by the security forces on 26 July 2016 while he was traveling back to his home from Turbat. The other passengers in the van witnessed his abduction when the van was stopped at Ginah Frontier Corps check post and all the passengers' ID cards were checked. After confirming the identity of Noor Ahmed, he was blindfolded and offloaded from the vehicle.

Turbat police refused to lodge the FIR against the security forces, saying they would register the case only if Zahra said her uncle had been abducted by unknown gunmen, not the FC, the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force responsible for the enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan.

She then approached the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's coordinator for Turbat task force, Professor Ghani Parwaz, who accompanied her to the police station. "Police further terrorized the family by saying 'if you launch a case against FC, it would put yourself and the rest of your family at risk. You know FC won't listen to anyone. They will release him when they want'", said Parwaz when we called him for an update on the case.

Zahra then traveled more than 700 Kilometers to Quetta and submitted an application in the Balochistan High Court. The remedies and the judicial system did not work and the tortured body of Noor Ahmed was found dumped in Meerabad, Tump, district Kech on 2 January, 2018.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the U.N. Human Rights Council to urge the Government of Pakistan:

- to stop arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan Province,
- to ensure the protection for the civilian population and the respect of their basic human rights,
- to provide information on the whereabouts of those persons who disappeared,
- to end impunity for arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the Balochistan Province.